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**BEFORE THE
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

FINANCE DOCKET NO. 34428



**PETITION OF THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK
AND NEW JERSEY FOR DECLARATORY ORDER**

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE PORT AUTHORITY OF
NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY**

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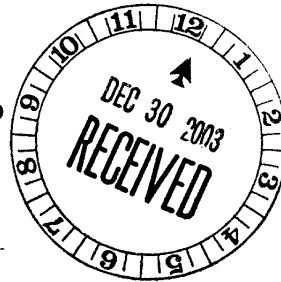
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Dated: December 30, 2003

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On October 22, 2003, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (the "Port Authority") filed the above-captioned Petition in this matter. On November 18, 2003, the Board caused notice of the Petition to be filed in the Federal Register (68 Fed. Reg. 65113) and requested public comment on the Petition by December 18, 2003. The comment period has ended and the only comments received by the Board have been in support of the Petition.

Accordingly, the Port Authority reply is limited to a request for the Board to grant its request for a Declaratory Order with respect to the Chemical Coast Connector as described in the Petition. The Port Authority also renews its request that the Board's decision herein be rendered as quickly as possible so that this important public project may proceed. A positive decision before January 15, 2004, would permit the Port Authority to award bids based on current proposals which are due to expire on that date. Such a timely positive decision would most probably save the public significant costs since any extension or contract rebidding would likely cause bid prices to be higher than the current bids.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald F. Burke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "D" and "B".

Donald F. Burke, New Jersey Solicitor
The Port Authority of New York and
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul M. Donovan". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a large "P" and "D".

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